

4.10 Water Quality

The Proposed Action or alternatives are not expected to differ significantly in their potential impacts to water quality since, in general, fishing activity has only a limited impact on water quality compared to the myriad of other sources of pollutant inputs to Puget Sound. Most pollutant sources affecting Puget Sound are land-based, as previously described in Subsection 3.10 (Puget Sound Water Quality Action Team 2002). While quantitative estimates of vessel traffic and pollution due to vessel activity are not available, the large number of potential land-based sources and their impact to water quality significantly exceeds potential variation in vessel activity that would result from differences between the Puget Sound Chinook Harvest Resource Management Plan and other fishing regime alternatives under consideration.

Most vessels are used for more than salmon fishing activity. This is probably most true for sport fishing vessels rather than for commercial fishing vessels, but the majority of fishing vessel activity within the Puget Sound Action Area is related to sport fishing. Both sport and commercial fishing vessels are used to harvest other resources (such as, shrimp, herring, crab, rock fish, and shellfish), and smaller vessels are used for other leisure activities (like family trips, diving, pleasure cruising, and water skiing). Although the reductions in angler trips predicted to result from Alternatives 2, 3 or 4 may result in a decrease in vessel traffic in some areas, the reduction is likely to be low or immeasurable given the alternative uses available for these vessels.

4.10.1 Sedimentation and Turbidity

Neither the Proposed Action nor the alternatives considered are predicted to have a measurable adverse or beneficial impact on the levels of sedimentation or turbidity in Puget Sound. No impact is expected. Also, no indirect, cumulative, or long-term impacts are expected to occur.

4.10.2 Non-Point Source Pollution

Neither the Proposed Action nor the alternatives considered are predicted to have a measurable adverse or beneficial impact on the level of non-point source pollution in Puget Sound. No impact is expected. Similarly, no indirect, cumulative, or long-term impacts are expected to occur.

